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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PETRESKI (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

later: Mr. MURPHY (Vice-Chairman) (Ireland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 97: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/50/113 and Add.1, A/50/254-S/1995/501, A/50/345, A/50/425-S/1995/787, A/50/475, A/50/518)

(a) TRIENNIAL POLICY REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (continued) (A/50/202-E/1995/76 and Add.1-3)

1. Ms. HEYZER (Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)) said that at the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Governments of more than 100 countries, most United Nations organizations and the non-governmental organizations present had adopted a strong Platform for Action, and that the time had come to translate the commitments made at the Conference into action, by allowing women to participate in the decisions that affected their lives, and bring about a world of equality, peace and well-being for all.

2. In the wake of the Conference, the key concerns of UNIFEM were the political and economic empowerment of women; women must have access to and control over economic resources on a long-term sustainable basis, and they must have control over their own lives and become decision makers at all levels.

3. During the 20 years of its existence, UNIFEM had achieved many successes in the areas women had identified as priorities and, in keeping with its mandate, it continued to work both in the developing countries and within the United Nations system. It was building partnerships with other United Nations agencies to bring about sustainable and gender-equitable development. UNIFEM pursued those aims through its participation in various inter-agency working groups and its association with non-governmental organizations and women's groups.

4. At the current time, UNIFEM regional advisers were providing technical support to United Nations resident coordinators to facilitate the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action at the national level. UNIFEM was also working closely with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) at the country level, and with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to build links between the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. That action was reinforced at the local level by action taken in various regional bodies.

5. UNIFEM was a small organization, which meant it could respond quickly when new problems arose, and yet it had a strong constituency throughout the developing world. It had been assigned a leading role in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and was ready to meet that challenge. In order to honour the commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women, UNIFEM urgently needed to double its resources, which currently stood at $12 million. It wished to thank all Member States for their generous support at the recent pledging conference, and called on the international community to show the political will needed to allocate the necessary resources to that important aspect of human and social development.

6. Ms. ULLOA (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of States members of the Rio Group, said that the Rio Group and other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean had set out their priorities for development in the Montevideo Declaration signed on 19 May 1995.

7. Each actor in the development process had a clearly defined role to play. The donor countries should reach the agreed targets for official development assistance and should provide resources for operational activities for development on a predictable continuous and assured basis. The United Nations system should safeguard the universal, neutral and multilateral nature of operational activities, which should meet the needs of the developing countries and respect their policies and priorities. The developing countries, for their part, should take charge of their own development.

8. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean agreed with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that the latter should concentrate its resources in four areas of sustainable human development: elimination of poverty, the environment, the status of women and job creation. While subscribing to the programme approach, the same countries believed that greater flexibility was desirable to allow the particular conditions of different countries to be taken into account, and that the project approach was preferable in some specialized sectors.

9. For those reasons, a triennial review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system was essential, as only with a periodic review was it possible to correct mistakes and improve the effectiveness of the system. For the same reasons, the decentralization of all funds, programmes and specialized agencies - consequent strengthening of field offices - would encourage dialogue and pragmatic solutions and was a welcome development, as were efforts to simplify and harmonize procedures.

10. In the Montevideo Declaration the signatories expressed their concern that the resources allocated to them by UNDP had been noticeably reduced, their region being considered to have reached a certain level of development. In fact, their development efforts were in a sense being held back by the uncertainties of the world economic situation.

11. With regard to economic and technical cooperation between developing countries, the Montevideo Declaration reaffirmed that, like all operational activities of the United Nations, it should correspond strictly to the national priorities defined by the countries themselves.

12. Mr. DUBČEK (Slovakia) said that since the United Nations had a broad mandate but only limited resources, it should seek to strike a balance between activities devoted to peace-keeping and international security and those devoted to social and economic development. It should incorporate a practical approach to dealing with everyday problems in its policies and strategies for development funds and programmes.

13. According to documentation on United Nations operational activities for development (A/50/202/Add.2, in 1993 and 1994 operational activities were carried out in only one of the two successor States of the former

Czechoslovakia, even though both those States had been admitted as Members of the United Nations on the same day. One could ask whether the United Nations system preferred to take the easier path by relying on traditional connections. And yet Slovakia had had to build its entire State administration by itself. Fortunately Slovakia had been among the new countries of Central and Eastern Europe which had benefitted from bilateral support from some donor countries.

14. Donor countries should have more opportunity to see what was being done with their contributions to United Nations development funds and programmes. Some way should be found to increase the representation of newly admitted Member States from Central and Eastern Europe, although the hiring freeze made that difficult to do. One way to address the problem would be to offer young people from those countries internships in various parts of the United Nations. With regard to actions taken by the executive boards of United Nations development funds and programmes (A/50/202/Add.1), Slovakia supported the recommendation of the Economic Commission for Europe that the Commission should act as a focal point to promote cooperation between United Nations programmes and organs dealing with the integration of transition countries into the global economy.

15. UNDP should play a central role in sustainable human development. The decision by the Executive Board to strengthen the Regional Directorate for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States had been a positive step forward. Since the Secretary-General had entrusted the Administrator with responsibility for assisting him in improving coordination of operational activities for development, a number of positive outcomes had been obtained, including an agreement with the Director of the Department of Public Information, aimed at strengthening the role of resident coordinators.

16. Mr. AL MANIA (Qatar) said that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations offered an excellent opportunity to review the scope of operational activities for development, particularly since development was the Organization's main objective. Moreover, the resources being allocated to operational activities were not assured and were declining, at a time of change when operational activities were having to be constantly adapted to meet the countries' growing needs. While it was natural that the United Nations should be asked to help Governments deal with problems for which they had insufficient financial resources, the gap between the needs of Member States and the capacity of the United Nations system to accommodate them was growing.

17. The Organization should make clear exactly what resources were available. Official development assistance, after remaining constant for 20 years, had fallen from $60.8 billion in 1992 to $55.9 billion in 1993. That would have a negative impact on assistance in general, and on operational activities in particular, and was very worrying. Whereas the Executive Board, by its resolution 90/34, had envisaged an annual growth rate of 8 per cent in voluntary contributions for the five-year period 1992-1996, contributions to UNDP had remained constant in real terms; in the past year, there had been a sharp fall in contributions which had produced a deficit of $1.4 billion for the five-year period as a whole. Those financial problems were also affecting the work of UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Food Programme (WFP), which were often the executing agencies for UNDP and long-term planning had been hampered by the unpredictability of levels of contributions. It was therefore necessary, in the

context of the triennial review of operational activities for development, to devise a more predictable and reliable financing mechanism, drawing on the recommendation made in resolution 46/182, and to urge Governments to abide by their commitments.

20. Co-operation between the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations should be strengthened, particularly in the area of the environment and poverty alleviation, since that co-operation was important to developing countries and since the practical experience of the United Nations was of interest to the financial institutions.

21. Qatar's contributions to operational activities for development totalled $565,000, of which $175,000 had gone to UNDP and the rest had gone to the WFP, UNIFEM, and UNEP.

22. Mr. MARTINEZ BLANCO (Honduras), speaking on behalf of the countries of Central America, endorsed the statement made by the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The world had changed a great deal since the signing of the United Nations Charter, yet no mechanism had been put in place to promote effectively North-South and South-South dialogue.

23. Given the scale of need in developing countries, the United Nations should be given adequate resources for operational activities, including those relating to the fight against poverty, hunger and environmental degradation, development of human resources and job creation. Those were vital activities which should retain their universal, multilateral, neutral and flexible character, so that they could be adapted to the needs of receiving countries.

24. More emphasis should be given to economic and technical cooperation between developing countries, the potential of which was by no means negligible. The countries of Central America supported the idea of creating a trust fund and of organizing a conference on South-South cooperation. They had drawn up an integrated agenda for sustainable development in the subregion, based on dialogue, which deserved the support the United Nations system.

25. While General Assembly resolution 48/160 had paved the way for the reform of the Economic and Social Council and other bodies, it was none the less necessary to revitalize the organizations of the United Nations system dealing with development cooperation by reviewing their operations and enabling them to cooperate more closely with the World Bank and other Bretton Woods institutions. Only by carrying out a structural analysis of the world's development problems could solutions be found.

26. Mr. Soo Gil PARK (Republic of Korea) welcomed new trends in operational activities, such as the greater range of operational activities and the fact that they were being carried out in an increasing number of countries. Country strategy notes should integrate United Nations activities into national priorities and facilitate monitoring and evaluation. Although not all countries had adopted that system, a number viewed it as a valuable tool for coordinating external aid, and the majority of resident coordinators regarded it as useful. Countries should be assisted in drawing up strategy notes, if they so desired, but they should be left free to decide on matters of content.

25. The programme approach was working well, but should be implemented more flexibly.

26. It was encouraging to note that national execution had increased significantly, although, as suggested in recommendation 16 of the report under consideration, it should be on a situation-specific basis. National execution was an important instrument to strengthen national capacities.

27. In line with recommendation 8, the resident coordinator system should be strengthened in order to make better use of the limited available resources. Considerable work had already been done to that end, since the Administrator of UNDP had been entrusted with the overall responsibility of assisting the Secretary-General in improving the coordination of operational activities.

28. With respect to simplification and harmonization of procedures, a targeted programme should be submitted to the Economic and Social Council in 1996, with a progress report in 1997.

29. Cooperation between the Bretton Woods institutions and other organizations of the United Nations system had been enhanced in the areas of social development, environment and combatting poverty, and the time had come to promote dialogue and harmonization among all bodies at the headquarters level.

30. In line with recommendation 23, periodic evaluations should be made of the impact of activities and the lessons learned should be systematically brought to the attention of those responsible for programming.

31. His delegation supported the principle of common premises, which offered numerous advantages, provided that it did not incur additional expenses. However, a willingness on the part of the United Nations system agencies to work together was more important than shared services and premises.

32. Finally, the Republic of Korea had increased its voluntary contributions by 65 per cent over the sum announced.

33. Mr. PAWAR (India) associated himself with the statement made by the Philippine delegation on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, but wished to make some additional remarks regarding the recommendations contained in the report submitted.

34. The country strategy note, which had been envisaged as a tool of convenience for the better coordination of the activities of the United Nations agencies in the field, and their better incorporation into the country's scheme of development activity, should remain optional and should not become the basis on which generalized policy guidelines were drawn up. India, like various other countries, India saw no need to use that mechanism, and emphasized that, pursuant to the relevant General Assembly resolution, those notes could never be discussed by any of the Boards of United Nations bodies or by foreign Governments.

35. It would also appear that the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/50/202) were based more on responses from the field

representatives of the agencies on the ground than on replies from the sovereign Governments themselves. It would be interesting to know how many countries had indicated their views. Some of the 28 recommendations proposed were practical and could be considered, but most were intrusive. Formulation of guidelines applicable to the United Nations system as a whole on the basis of a narrow range of experience contradicted the spirit of United Nations development assistance.

36. The importance India attached to development activities was reflected in its generous contributions. However, the rules must be respected and such assistance must be universal and impartial.

37. Mr. ZENNA (Ethiopia) concurred with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and noted that many developing countries, especially the most deprived, were experiencing enormous problems relating to poverty and illiteracy, among other issues, which frequently threatened the very existence of their populations. He commended the important role played by the United Nations bodies in their efforts to improve the situation. He welcomed the decision of the Executive Board of the UNDP to put the eradication of poverty at the centre of its development activities and to increase the rate of total resources allocated to the least developed countries. He hoped that other United Nations bodies would do likewise.

38. Ethiopia supported an integrated approach at the national and regional levels, which directly benefited Ethiopia by providing supportive services to the Government's decentralization efforts. That approach had also been applied to the fifth country programme cycle.

39. He was gratified that national execution was increasingly becoming the norm for operational development activities of the United Nations system and that such projects and programmes, were receiving additional resources. Since few least developed countries executed their own programmes, much remained to be done, and capacity-building should continue to be an essential part of the operational activities of the United Nations system at the national level.

40. The process of ongoing decentralization and delegation of power currently occurring within United Nations development organizations was crucial. For reasons of cost-effectiveness, more national experts should also be involved. The United Nations should respond to the growing needs of developing countries, and the number of experts in the field should be increased.

41. The question of funding of activities was of central importance, but resources had stagnated or were declining. The most disadvantaged developing countries were the most seriously affected by the reduced United Nations programmes in particular, where net flows of official development assistance had decreased; those of sub-Saharan Africa received only an insignificant proportion of direct foreign investment devoted to developing countries and were suffering a continued decline in exports. A mechanism should therefore be established whereby continuous and predictable resources continuously available.

42. Mr. Murphy (Ireland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

43. Mr. OMAR (Bangladesh) endorsed the views expressed by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and of China and noted the steps taken to implement recommendations contained in General Assembly resolutions 44/211, 47/199 and 48/162. He welcomed the growing collaboration between United Nations bodies, particularly through the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) and the Consultative Committee on Programmes and Operational Activities (CCPOQ). It was more important than ever to adapt operational activities to the needs and priorities of individual countries, involving local officials at each stage of projects, and to build up national capacity by fully involving the institutions, expertise and services of the beneficiary country and furthering decentralization and delegation of authority.

44. In that connection, it was crucial that resident coordinators should continue to provide team leadership, that Governments should be able to retain direct access to the appropriate development bodies in accordance with their comparative advantages and that programmes should have sufficient flexibility to respond to the specific development objectives of each country. There was growing concern that the United Nations was according more importance to conflict resolution than to short-term humanitarian relief activities, when development constituted the only means of laying solid foundations for international peace and security. The resident coordinator might assume responsibility for humanitarian assistance as well as for other operational activities, but should not exercise any political function whatsoever, since that would undermine the principle of neutrality of the Coordinator's activities.

45. With respect to the critical resource position of United Nations funds and programmes, his delegation considered that it was not so much a financial question as one of lack of political will among the international community. Ironically, the lack of resources which was reflected in the decline in official development assistance came at a time when there was talk of revitalizing the United Nations system to respond better to the economic and social needs of the developing countries. In order to be effective, the operational activities required a continuous, predictable and assured flow of funds especially towards the least developed countries which were in a desperate economic situation.

46. The restructuring and strengthening of the Economic and Social Council had afforded an opportunity for more interaction between the Council and the executive boards of the Funds and Programmes, which should receive policy guidance from the Council in the interest of programme coordination and consistency.

47. The programme approach remained an important element in better integrating efforts made within the United Nations system with national priorities and in mobilizing resources for the purpose. However, it was not an end in itself and should be implemented with greater flexibility so as to take into account the diverse needs of each country.

48. His delegation considered that little progress had been made with respect to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 relating to harmonization and simplification of the rules, procedures and formats of the United Nations system.

49. Furthermore, whereas the concept of a regional strategy note was still somewhat premature, exchange of information and experience should be intensified through institutions such as the regional economic commissions. The country strategy notes should be prepared, if desired by the Government in question, under its sole responsibility and as a complementary tool for overall programming undertaken with or without the assistance of the United Nations agencies.

50. With respect to cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, which was currently being discussed by the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on an Agenda for Development, the policy dialogue could be promoted within the framework of a strengthened Economic and Social Council, at the level of Headquarters, and with the resident coordinators at the country level. The Bretton Woods institutions could also lend their support to efforts undertaken within the United Nations system in capacity building, poverty eradication, and environmental conservation. Conversely, the United Nations system could make a contribution by giving a human face to the structural adjustment programmes designed by the Bretton Woods institutions.

51. On that basis, his delegation undertook to contribute actively to the important triennial policy review of operational activities.

52. Mr. BETI (Observer for Switzerland), noting that the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (A/50/202) were a sound basis for discussion of the directions and guidelines to be followed for operational activities over the following three years, said that five major issues required consideration.

53. First, international cooperation for development was going through a difficult phase because the traditional donor countries were facing serious budgetary problems while, at the same time the foreign aid needs of the countries of the South and a large number of countries in transition were continuing to increase. Priorities would therefore have to be reviewed and painful choices made in order to obtain the best possible results with the available resources, and each organization should focus on the areas in which it had genuine comparative advantages.

54. Where the efficiency of the operational activities of the United Nations was concerned, it should be noted that progress had been achieved in national execution and the programme approach, although much remained to be done with respect to the country strategy note and coordination. However important they might be, such aspects should not be treated as an end in themselves: the point was that they should achieve the desired impact. Switzerland was therefore prepared to give financial support for a study on the subject, which had not been dealt with in the report of the Secretariat.

55. The greatest comparative advantages were to be derived in the area of capacity-building - for both programme design and management - since given their neutrality and impartiality, the United Nations funds and programmes were in the best position to assist partner countries in assuming responsibility for their own destiny.

56. Regarding teams at field level on whom the system's reputation largely depended, the quality of resident coordinators could be improved through a rigorous selection process; inter-agency team work at the local level could lead to better results by eliminating counter-productive rivalries.

57. Lastly, the system of funding operational activities, inter alia through multi-bilateral funding, did not constitute a lasting solution in terms of preserving the neutrality, independence and impartiality of the United Nations. The ad hoc working group on funding modalities should therefore consider the possible options especially for stopping the erosion of general funding for funds and programmes.

58. Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand), commending the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/202) as a useful reference for the Committee's deliberations, said that the triennial review should be aimed at strengthening the existing system of operational activities for development so as to allow it to respond better to the needs of the beneficiaries, particularly the developing countries. Indeed, an increasing number of countries were making demands on the United Nations organizations for support not only in traditional areas - food production, poverty alleviation, health and education - but also in other sectors such as strengthening of national capacities for research and development, environmental protection and sustainable development.

59. Concerted efforts were therefore required at all levels to achieve those development objectives and should take the form of closer collaboration between Governments, specialized agencies of the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector; coordination of those efforts should be provided by the Economic and Social Council. In any event, it should be ensured that the recipient Government bore primary responsibility for its national development programme and the priorities established.

60. In view of the diverse scenarios in each country, the United Nations agencies should adjust to the local needs for sustainable development; in that connection, the resident coordinating system was important, and should be strengthened as the focal point for dialogue essential to ensure programme success.

61. With regard to planning tools, the country strategy note provided an excellent framework for United Nations development activities and should be expanded to regional cooperation, in implementation of recommendations 19 and 20 in the report of the Secretary-General. The programme approach, for its part, better accommodated the needs of the developing countries. National execution was a practical way to enhance national capacity and institution-building, even though various difficulties had arisen during the implementation process, in part because of the lack of clarity of some of the rules applied. His delegation also welcomed inter-agency coordination mechanisms such as the joint consultative groups which provided an opportunity for the exchange of views between the various partners.

62. All those activities required financial support on an orderly, stable and predictable basis, and it was therefore critical that donor countries

demonstrate the political commitment to provide the funds promised and thereby to reach the objectives established during the triennial review.

63. Mr. HORIGUCHI (Japan) said that since General Assembly resolution 2688 (XXV) had declared UNDP to be the lead agency for operational activities for development, the other funds and programmes had become more financially independent and UNDP no longer could play that role. Nevertheless, it should remain responsible for the coordination of the entire system and its ability to do so should be strengthened.

64. Although resident coordinators had a key role to play, they should be assisted by ensuring that the local representatives of other entities engaged in operational activities consulted them regarding the implementation of major programmes and by authorizing the resident coordinators to propose to the heads of those entities the amendment of country programmes and major projects, where required, to bring them into line with the country strategy note, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/199.

65. The country strategy note contributed to the effective implementation of United Nations operational activities and to the coordination of development projects at the local level. He therefore welcomed the decision of the World Bank to participate in the preparation of country strategy notes. His delegation also fully supported recommendation 25. It would also be possible to improve coordination between United Nations agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions by requesting United Nations agencies to formulate specific development plans which could be funded by the World Bank. For its part, his Government was prepared to promote coordination between its own bilateral projects and those of multilateral agencies. The report by the Secretary-General indicated that approximately two thirds of the developing countries had opted for the country strategy note process. However, so many countries remained indifferent or opposed to the process because they considered the benefits to be minimal compared with the substantial effort required to prepare the notes. That attitude placed the system in danger. Accordingly, it would be best not to limit the country strategy note process to the operational activities of the United Nations. Donor countries also should use the notes to coordinate bilateral assistance activities, with the result that the entire range of assistance would be implemented in a coordinated and effective manner. Should a consensus on the issue emerge, his Government was prepared to make the best use of country strategy notes in its development assistance activities.

66. The decision by recipient countries to promote national execution was a considerable achievement, but it should be borne in mind that they would be able to avail themselves of its benefits only if they had the administrative capacity to do so. It would be necessary to review how national execution was implemented in each country and to determine whether the desired objectives were attained and, if necessary, to make any required changes, pursuant to recommendations 16 and 21.

67. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) said that the financial crisis affecting the United Nations was all the more serious because the end of the cold war had generated high hopes that a better world was finally within mankind's grasp. Moreover, the geographic coverage of operational activities had been extended to the CIS

countries and their scope now also included administrative reform, the defence of human rights and elections, and financial resources therefore should have been increased accordingly. As the Secretary-General had stated in his report (A/50/202), for financing for operational activities, the gap between what was sought and what could be provided was large and widening. For example, official development assistance had declined sharply, representing only 0.29 per cent of GNP for the States members of the Development Assistance Committee. Core contributions to UNDP had remained stagnant in real terms and it had been necessary to reduce programme allocations for the fifth cycle by 30 per cent. That was accompanied by a clear shift by donor countries to favour projects in areas which were deemed to be consistent with their particular interests, which was a deplorable erosion of multilateralism. Lastly, the unpredictability of UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP resources made long-term planning more difficult. For all those reasons, it was essential to resume and complete the negotiations on the establishment of an improved financing system to ensure the availability of adequate funding for operational activities on a predictable basis.

68. Those economic difficulties notwithstanding, since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/199 the United Nations system had made considerable progress towards making its structure more integrated and effective and in more clearly defining its activities and ensuring that they were more complementary. The country strategy note had received the support of the overwhelming majority of recipient countries. The harmonization of programming cycles was continuing, the programme approach was winning ground and national execution was the norm in operational activities for development. The resident coordinator system had been strengthened, United Nations agencies had continued to delegate authority to their field offices and the sharing of premises and offices was increasingly common.

69. However, serious problems remained to be overcome with respect to the simplification and harmonization of procedures. The complexity of United Nations procedures created extra work for the developing countries which impeded the implementation of national execution. Not all agencies favoured common premises and some were disinclined to take part in the coordination effort. In the absence of a clear definition of the programme approach, some countries had undertaken experiments which should be analysed, while others had simply reduced the number of small projects.

70. The task of preparing the country strategy note was long and complex and the resident coordinator and the priorities of UNDP exerted undue influence on the system.

71. The current triennial review of operational activities was being conducted during a financial crisis whose far-reaching causes must be eliminated. It was to be hoped that the industrialized countries would take the efforts of the developing countries into account and that they would increase their financial contribution. Indeed, the goals of social progress and sustainable human development should be pursued by all, individually and collectively, in accordance with the principle of the equitable sharing of responsibilities.

72. Mrs. POLLACK (United States of America) welcomed the progress made with respect to the country strategy note and the programme approach. Her delegation

also was pleased that the Bretton Woods institutions were endeavouring to collaborate more closely with the United Nations development system.

73. The report by the Secretary-General contained focused and useful recommendations, in particular with regard to evaluation, monitoring and review, capacity-building and the resident coordinator system.

74. Her delegation endorsed recommendation 23 and was pleased to note that the evaluation of selected components of operational activities would be a key element of the next triennial review. All agencies should participate actively in that evaluation. The development agencies of the United Nations could further integrate their evaluation activities, for example by ensuring a unified evaluation procedure, by acknowledging the importance of the evaluation process and by ensuring that lessons learned were incorporated in new programmes.

75. Capacity-building was essential if governments and their citizens were to take full responsibility for their development. National execution was a critical component in that regard, for without it no development activity would be sustainable. At the same time it should not be viewed as the ultimate goal of capacity-building efforts. The United Nations system had the privilege - although not necessarily yet the capability - of helping developing countries strengthen their capacity to design and analyse policies, formulate strategies and assess needs. Capacity should be built up at all levels of society, as stipulated in recommendation 22.

76. The resident coordinator system must be strengthened, but in conjunction with an improvement of dialogue at the country level. Much had been asked of the United Nations system as a result of the recent international conferences on population, social development and women. Expectations for unlimited resource transfers must come to an end, and specific priorities had to be established. The ability of Governments to articulate policies and programmes clearly was becoming increasingly critical to the success of the resident coordinator system. Moreover, as in any system, consistency at all levels was a necessary ingredient; hence the usefulness of recommendations 9 and 10.

77. General Assembly resolution 47/199 gave clear guidance regarding harmonization of procedures and shared premises and services. What was not clear, however, was that the agencies involved were committed to achieving practical results. It was the only way in which the system would be able to respond in a coherent and efficient manner to the development needs of a country.

78. Three points required clarification. First, the utility of a system of regional strategy notes (recommendation 20) had not yet been established, and it was not certain that the regional commissions could or should take on such a responsibility. Secondly, while national execution was essential for long-term sustainability, accountability had to be enhanced at the same time, and to do so, internationally accepted standards of accountability must be in place. Thirdly, while funding patterns for operational activities had changed over the past decade, the triennial policy review was not the proper framework for finding better ways of funding. Other contexts would be more appropriate.

79. Mrs. RADUCHOWSKA-BROCHWICZ (Poland) noted with satisfaction the contributions made by the Consultative Committee for Programme and Operational Questions to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199, particularly to the strengthening of the resident coordinator system, the promotion of national execution of projects, the adoption of a common interpretation of the programme approach and the formulation of guidelines on the system of country strategy notes. The same was true of the work of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy and its subsidiary organs.

80. Although much had already been done, the effectiveness of the development sector of the United Nations system needed improvement. Many recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General should be dealt with also in other contexts, particularly that of the restructuring and revitalization of the role of the Organization in the economic, social and related fields. There, the Economic and Social Council was primarily involved, and it should make some changes in its methods of work. More precise information, however, should be provided on how the recommendations would actually be put into effect, especially recommendation 3.

81. One of the most important issues was capacity-building, and Poland fully endorsed the recommendations in the report. The activities of the United Nations system should be better coordinated, through the resident coordinators, who should be given the needed tools to work effectively. The UNDP Executive Board had taken a welcome decision to use 1.7 per cent of the Programme's resources to support the resident coordinator functions. Her delegation would like more specific information on the single review committee (recommendation 10). The monitoring of development activities and the assessment of their impact should also be given attention.

82. Her delegation was not ready to support recommendation 20 concerning a regional strategy note, even though it believed that regional factors were taking on greater significance in national development policies. Flexibility in the choice of policies was the single most important factor in the effectiveness of the role played by the United Nations system. There was a need for a country strategy note, but it should be conceived so as to reflect the conditions and requirements of the various countries.

83. Her Government was very satisfied with making national execution the norm for the operational activities of United Nations agencies, since it had great potential for national capacity-building, whose benefits should be obvious to Governments. It would greatly facilitate cooperation, an input of funds and technology, and technical cooperation.

84. Mr. LAING (Belize) said that he shared the views expressed by the delegation of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Caribbean Community. Belize was in general agreement with the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/202) and particularly applauded the steady move towards enhanced coordination of the activities of the various agencies, and their increased efficiency. The progress made in applying various elements of resolution 47/199 was encouraging, especially as to the recruitment of resident coordinators and the decentralization of regional offices. The system of country strategy notes

certainly was promising but the agencies, and especially UNDP, would do well to expand their facilities for providing training in the preparation of the notes. His delegation likewise supported recommendation 15; the resident coordinator could act as a catalyst in the activities in question.

85. The subject of capacity-building was never dealt with in detail in the report. Yet there was an urgent need for it, in many countries, for various reasons.

86. Regional coordination was not covered in detail in the report. In the case of Belize, in the absence of a resident coordinator, the various agencies worked from four locations in the two subregions of which Belize was a member. More dialogue among the agencies concerned and more coordination were therefore necessary. The annex to the report of the Secretary-General contained a particularly interesting analysis of the role of the donor community, which could be of great assistance but could never be a substitute for policy-making by the local authorities. Mention should also be made of recommendation 1, concerning the role of the Economic and Social Council in ensuring consistency among activities, and recommendations 6 and 7 concerning resources. It was urgent for the General Assembly to deal with the problem of the financing of the Organization and its development activities.

87. Lastly, Belize noted with satisfaction that UNDP had hastened to point out, at the time its 1995 Human Development Report had been issued, that there had been problems with the compilation of data relating to Belize, and its doing so had countered the negative consequences of inaccurate data from outside sources.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.